

**NSRB Grant Application
Business Forms Search Upgrade**

1. Name of agency applying for grant

Chief Information Officer

2. Title or brief description of the project

Business Forms Search Upgrade

3. Grant request amount

\$16,500

4. Will there be a fee for accessing records associated with this project?

There will be no direct fee for any services available through the Business Forms Search feature. Some services that are linked to the portal may have fees that have been separately approved by the board.

5. If yes, provide any statutory reference or authorization for the fee

N/A

6. Please describe the project in detail

Nebraska@ Online for Business, also known as the Business Portal, was initially launched in 2001. The Business Portal is designed as a one-stop-shop for information and services used by business in their interactions with government agencies. The most significant value-added feature of the portal is an inventory of forms used by various agencies in their interaction with business. The inventory, which is called the “Business Forms Search” allows users to search the forms inventory by agency, key word or business type and, if desired, store the information in an online portfolio. Maintenance of information in the inventory is handled by staff members from various agencies.

Experience with the system over the past three years has disclosed several shortcomings. Currently, information exists on more than 1,200 forms. However, information on some forms is not complete. Different methods are used to input form titles, with the result being several dozen that begin with “Nebraska” or “Application for.” This makes search and retrieval less than optimal. The industry search function has not been very useful, because the underlying standard industry codes do not generate good results.

Another problem is linking to online systems that require authentication as the first step. The forms database needs a feature that helps the user understand the authentication process before being asked for a password, PIN, or other means of authentication.

The basic system for the inventory database remains viable, but enhancements are needed to improve the user interface (through which business access forms information) and the administrative tools (used by agencies and NOL staff to maintain information in the inventory).

These enhancements will provide a foundation for use of the system for a wider range of forms, including those used by citizens in general. This would allow the Citizen Portal and possibly other subportals to include a forms search capability targeted to its users.

Proposed enhancements include:

- Review and revise the type of information that is collected for the inventory to add new requirements (e.g., authentication) and eliminate sections such as the industry code that have not been as useful as anticipated;
- Develop “naming conventions” for certain types of information such as form titles. This will provide guidance for agencies to enter form titles in a consistent manner, and will result in more consistency and ease of use for businesses;
- Review and upgrade of user interfaces for both external users (businesses) and internal users (agency staff);
- Review and upgrade the overall portal architecture to improve navigation and expand sources of information;

7. Please describe whom the beneficiary or recipient of this service will be and projected activity for access or use of the proposed service

Beneficiaries include businesses of all types who must complete forms to transact various activities with government agencies. Businesses will also benefit by having one-stop access to a wide range of information from federal and state agencies, educational institutions, and economic development organizations.

8. Estimated timeline for completion

Work is expected to begin in May 2004, starting with development of a Project Charter, soliciting input from agencies on possible enhancements, and development of system specifications. Development work is expected to begin in mid-June, with completion, testing and launch of the enhanced system anticipated by early September. The time required for development and testing is dependent upon the requirements identified in early stages of the project, so the launch date is an estimate and may be revised once system specifications are developed.

9. Agency contribution to the project (labor, equipment, etc.)

All design and development work will be performed by Nebrask@ Online, with review by the CIO, and if appropriate, other agency personnel. Once upgrades to the forms database and administrative screens are completed, agency staff will need to review and update their information in the system.

10. A. Has this project ever been submitted as a budget request (explain)?

No.

10. B. Does the project require additional statutory authority (explain)?

No.

10. C. Why is the grant money needed for the project, and if applicable, how will the service be sustained once the grant money is expended?

Initial development of Nebrask@ Online for Business was supported by a prior NSRB grant. Once launched, maintenance of the system has been subsidized by general network revenue. This project constitutes a significant review and upgrade of the forms inventory, and an additional grant for the enhancements is warranted. Long-term, the NSRB may wish to review how ongoing maintenance and periodic upgrade of the system is supported.

11. Please describe how this project will enhance the delivery of state agency services or access to those services.

The proposed enhancements are intended to increase the value of Nebrask@ Online for Business in providing one-stop access to a wide range of agency services. The utility of the forms inventory should be enhanced, and the upgraded portal architecture will improve ease of use and access to an even broader range of information and services.

12. Please describe how this project will 1) improve the efficiency of agency operations; 2) facilitate collaboration among state agencies; 3) facilitate collaboration between state agencies and other public institutions; 4) support public/private partnerships in the delivery of public services (you may respond to any or all of these criteria in your answer)

Improving the effectiveness and utility of forms information and one-stop access to business resources can reduce the number of phone calls and written requests for information received by agencies, allowing time to be redirected toward more productive activities. Integrating information in a single location promotes collaboration among agencies and other public institutions. The work being done by Nebrask@ Online continues the long-standing public/private partnership in the delivery of public services.

13. Contact person information

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